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Those Husbands of Ours

A Farce in One Act

BY

JESSIE A. KELLEY

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THOSE HUSBANDS OF OURS.

CAST OF CHARACTERS.

Mrs. Jones,
Mrs. Smith,
Mrs. Brown,
Mrs. Shaw,
Mrs. White,
Mrs. Green, ... *Indignant Wives.*

Mrs. Black (*who has to laugh.*)

COSTUMES.—Modern.

STAGE.

A curtain is not necessary but may be used if desired. The stage should be arranged to represent a living room in the utmost disorder possible—lace curtains tied in knots, clothing of all descriptions on floor, chandelier and chairs,—matches, cards, pipes, papers, and dirty dishes everywhere—the more littered and ridiculous the better.

Notes.—Give jokes and stories very slowly thus allowing the audience time to see the point. Practise the story telling thoroughly—a story is made or spoiled in the telling—more remarks and questions should be interpolated during the story telling. Use local names *everywhere*. There is abundant opportunity for this and nothing takes so well as local hits. Act out everything possible.

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Those Husbands of Ours.

(*Enter* MRS. JONES *with suitcase and umbrella. She stands sideways just inside doorway, looking out through door, supposedly at kitchen.*)

MRS. JONES. Well, I never! Did you ever see such a looking kitchen in all your born days? I declare, I wouldn't have believed it possible that one lone man could have so thoroughly upset things in one short week. Catch me ever leaving him to keep house alone again! He thought I was getting tired and needed a rest so he talked with Smith and Brown and Shaw and White and Green and Black and they all decided their wives needed a little vacation so they induced us to go off together for a week—said they'd get along "fine and dandy." (*disgustedly*) Fine and dandy, indeed! (*drops suitcase and umbrella, looks around living room, throws out hands*) Well, if this is what they call fine and dandy, what on earth would it be if it wasn't fine and dandy? (*looks towards kitchen again*) Think I'll need a year's vacation after I get that kitchen in shape. Isn't that sink a sight! Chock full of dirty dishes! I didn't know I had so many dishes in the house. And more in this room! (*picks up chafing dish from table*) I declare if he hasn't fried beefsteak in my chafing dish and completely ruined it. Oh, dear me! And here's my best cut glass dish full of garbage. (*smells*) Phew! Such a looking place! Slept on the couch—too

lazy to go up stairs. I don't believe the rest of the women will find such looking houses. (*sinks down in chair with long drawn sigh and begins taking off wraps*) Well, I might as well take off my things, get some water on heating and go at it but it's a worse task than Hercules had cleaning out the Augean stables.

(*Knock at door,* MRS. SMITH *with shawl over head enters without waiting to be admitted—stops just inside door, holding up hands in surprise.*)

MRS. SMITH. I'll be jiggered, I didn't believe a worse looking house than that husband of mine had left could be found in all Christendom but I do believe this is a mighty close second.

MRS. JONES. Did you see that sink full of dishes in the kitchen? You don't mean to say yours is as bad as that?

MRS. SMITH. (*gesticulating*) Yes, sink full of them—then an overflow on chairs, floor and table—ashes a foot thick all around the kitchen stove, grease spots everywhere—likewise cat-hairs, my very best china dish broken in a hundred pieces and——

(*Knock*—MRS. JONES *goes to door.* MRS. BROWN *with tablecloth under her arm rushes excitedly past her and shakes out tablecloth which is covered with great black blotches.*)

MRS. BROWN. (*angrily*) Just look at that, will you? My very, very best embroidered tablecloth that I spent hours and hours and hours embroidering and that husband of mine has used it for a dish towel—not only for the china but for pots, pans and kettles. Isn't that enough to make a saint mad. (*sarcastically*) That's what comes when your husband insists that you need a little vacation.

Black as my shoe! I can never get it white again in this world.

MRS. SMITH. Isn't it an awful shame? I declare I'm almost afraid to look around my house much.

MRS. JONES. Too bad! *(picks up from the floor a very black looking cloth)* Well, here's one of my embroidered napkins that has evidently been used to wipe the stove although I see no sign of the stove ever having been wiped.

(*Knock at door.*)

MRS. JONES. Come in.

(*Enter* MRS. SHAW.)

MRS. SHAW. What a looking place!

MRS. JONES. I suppose your husband has kept yours looking as neat as wax.

MRS. SHAW. To tell you the truth I haven't got my courage up enough to go out in the kitchen yet but of all the looking sitting rooms you ever saw in your life mine is the "beatingest." (*gesticulates*) Lace curtains tied up in knots like a horse's tail, ceiling smoked blacker than the ace of spades and I should think a cyclone had struck the furniture. Aren't you glad we have such thoughtful husbands to send us away for a week to rest? (*nods and sarcastic remarks*) Thought I'd just run in to see how yours looked. Well, misery likes company.

(*Knock*—MRS. WHITE *enters with water pail apparently full of tobacco ashes. Acts as if it were very heavy—goes to centre of stage and puts it down—places hands on hips and throws back head.*)

MRS. WHITE. There, look at that, will you?

That's what I found in the middle of my mahogany parlor table and I believe there's *five* pails full on the floor and bushels of burnt matches. I should think that husband of mine had invited the whole town in while I was gone and they'd smoked incessantly day and night.

(*Exclamations of "Monsters!" "Beasts!" etc.*)

MRS. WHITE. (*looking around room*) I don't believe your husband is a model of neatness either, Mrs. Jones.

MRS. JONES. (*sarcastically*) Hardly.

MRS. WHITE. In what condition did you find your house, Mrs. Smith?

MRS. SMITH. Words cannot describe it.

MRS. WHITE. And yours, Mrs. Brown?

MRS. BROWN. Ditto, in italics.

(MRS. GREEN *rushes in with sheets under arm—spreads them out as others gather around her.*)

MRS. JONES. More trouble.

MRS. GREEN. I made up my five beds all clean before I left home and this is a sample of the condition of the sheets. Every bed been slept in (*stopping between each word*) by—men—with—boots—on—and—muddy—boots—at—that, and besides they've evidently polished their boots with the blankets, used my dresser covers for towels and my best down puff for a bath mat.

MRS. JONES. I really didn't realize we had such a depraved lot of husbands.

MRS. WHITE. They're perfect barbarians.

MRS. SHAW. Suppose they think they were leading the simple life. My husband is always prating about the simple life to me.

MRS. SMITH. My husband had a spell of that but I cured him of it mighty quick.

MRS. SHAW. I'd like to know how you did it.

I get simple life for breakfast, dinner and supper. He says there is no need of this cry of the high cost of living—it's the cost of high living and if we'd only drop our extravagant ways and do as our grandfathers and grandmothers did this howl of the high cost of living would very soon die out.

MRS. JONES. Yes, that's just what I hear.

MRS. BROWN. Just what my husband says!

MRS. WHITE. Same old story at my house.

MRS. GREEN. How did you stop it Mrs. Smith?

MRS. SMITH. Let's sit down and I'll tell you. (*all sit*) Well, I stood it just about as long as I could, knowing he was smoking twenty-five cent cigars, joining expensive clubs, hiring taxicabs, etc., so one morning after he had had an unusually severe attack of simple life, economy and so forth, I decided I'd settle the simple life question for him once and forever. As soon as he got away to the office I called in a furniture mover, we took all the comfortable, chairs, couch, tables, etc., down in the basement, took up all the rugs, left the floors all bare, took down all the pictures, put away all the china, cut glass and silver, then we got down a few rickety, uncomfortable chairs that had been discarded years ago, set up an old bedstead with a humpy straw tick, put a couple of cracked yellow bowls and some cheap spoons on the dining room table, got an old clay pipe and some of the cheapest tobacco I could find, shut off the gas and waited for the simple life man.

(*Laughter, chorus, "Good for you," "Bright idea," "Guess that fixed him," etc.*)

MRS. BROWN. It must have been a forsaken-looking house. What did he say when he got home?

MRS. SMITH. (*laughing heartily*) Oh, it was too funny for anything. He came in the door,

stopped, looked around, then put his hand to his head as if he couldn't believe his eyes.

MRS. SHAW. . Perhaps he thought he'd been at the club too long.

MRS. SMITH. Then the storm broke. "What does this mean?" he roared. "The simple life," I said sweetly, "we've begun to live it, just like our grandparents,—bare floors, straight chairs, no useless bric-a-brac that needs a maid to take care of (that was one of his stock quotations) and I can do all my own cooking since we have returned to the primitive life. We are going to have cold johnny cake and milk for supper" and I pointed to the two desreputable yellow bowls on the table. "No more extravagance in this household." I added.

MRS. JONES. Turned the tables on him good, didn't you?

MRS. BROWN. Wasn't he awful mad?

MRS. SMITH. He gave a roar like a caged lion and started to light the gas but it was shut off. "No more gas," says I blandly, "our grandparents got along nicely with candles," and I lighted one little flickering candle. "Woman," he howled, "what have you done with the furniture?" "I've put it in the basement until we can sell it?" but before I had the sentence finished he was half way down the street and in a few minutes came back with two men who immediately got to work putting back rugs, furniture, pictures, etc., and I've never heard simple life mentioned from that day to this.

MRS. SHAW. I'll try it to-morrow.

(*Chorus, so will I, yes, indeed, etc.*)

MRS. JONES. (*rising and going over to window, examines draperies*) My lace curtains are ruined—tied up in hard knots—(*tries to untie them—others*

walk around, examining things, pick up burnt matches, straighten chairs, cushions, etc.)

MRS. WHITE. (*taking pail of ashes from table*) Here's a pail of ashes to match mine and pipes—pipes—pipes—(*holds up pipe after pipe*)

MRS. SMITH. Look at these stacks of cards!

MRS. BROWN. (*to* MRS. JONES) Does your husband play poker?

MRS. JONES. No-o—I don't think so but I must say the sick friends he visits evenings borrow a good deal of his money.

MRS. WHITE. He's probably deceiving you about the sick friends he visits. My husband said to me the other day "Do you *think* I could deceive my own little wife?" "No," says I, "I *know* you could not but I believe you are silly enough to try."

MRS. GREEN. My husband doesn't like dancing.

MRS. JONES. What objection has he to dancing?

MRS. GREEN. He says it's merely hugging set to music.

MRS. SHAW. Which does he object to, the hugging or the music?

MRS. GREEN. Oh, the music, of course.

MRS. JONES. (*holding up cushions*) Look at my brand new cushions!

MRS. BROWN. (*picking up boots*) Evidently wore rubber boots to bed.

MRS. GREEN. (*holding up different articles*) Shirts, coats, papers on every chair!

MRS. JONES. He will persist in using this room for a bedroom if I'm away. (*shakes out pajamas and folds them up.*)

MRS. BROWN. "Shoes are on the chiffonier,
Trousers on the floor,
Shirts upon the chandelier,
Wife's been to the shore."

MRS. GREEN. (*going over to couch*) What has he been doing with the bedclothes?

MRS. SMITH. Guess all the clothes he owns are on the floor.

(MRS. JONES *looks under couch.*)

MRS. WHITE. What are you looking under the couch for?

MRS. JONES. Well, since that husband of mine has taken to automobiling I find that he often crawls under the bed and I didn't know but he might be there now.

MRS. BROWN. Force of habit, eh? Some folks would sell their homes for an auto.

MRS. JONES. My husband said we wouldn't need a home after we got the auto and (*looking around ruefully and sighing*) he certainly seems to have tried his best to destroy it.

MRS. SHAW. It took Charlie Young a year to make up his mind what kind of an auto to buy and I understand he was only two weeks picking out his wife.

MRS. GREEN. Probably thought he could dispose of his wife easier than he could of his auto.

MRS. SMITH. Ever hear about George Kendall the first time he saw a big touring car? (*chorus—No, tell us—What about it? etc.*)

MRS. SMITH. A big touring car filled with swell looking men whizzed past him leaving a trail of bluish smoke and the usual smell. "Gee," says he, "them may be swell city fellers but they certainly was smoking some durned awful smelling cigars." (*laughter*)

MRS. WHITE. You know when Albert Black was looking at automobiles he said he didn't know whether to buy a gasoline or limousine—asked the man which he thought smelled worse.

MRS. JONES. (*shaking out bedclothes*) I don't see how he ever got these clothes in such a mess.

MRS. BROWN. (*going over to couch*) Think your

husband must be rather restless. Isn't he a *sound* sleeper?

MRS. JONES. Sound? I should say so! The sound he makes can be heard half a mile.

MRS. GREEN. Snores, does he, eh? That makes me think of the time Mr. Small went to Chicago. He had got settled in his berth sound asleep and was snoring away at an awful rate when the man in the upper berth leaned over the edge and yelled at him, "Hi, you, down there are you rich?" "Hey, what do you want?" sleepily answered Mr. Small, after several repetitions of the question. I say, "are you rich?" "What do you mean by waking me up to ask me such a question as that?" "I want to know, that's why." "Well it's none of your business," says Mr. Small, "but to gratify your curiosity I'll tell you I *am* rich." "Well, then, why in thunder don't you charter a whole train to do your snoring in?" (*laughter and remarks*)

MRS. BROWN. My husband sleeps so sound you can hardly wake him. The other night some one was yelling fire at the top of his voice and I finally got him partly awake and told him to slip on his trousers and go down and see where the fire was. He was still half asleep, got his trousers on hind side before, started for the stairs and fell down the whole flight. I rushed after him and said, "Are you hurt?" "No," says he, looking at his trousers, "but I must have got an awful twist." (*laughter and remarks*)

MRS. JONES. I get madder and madder the more I look at these rooms. I'm going out in the sitting room and telephone to that husband of mine. He's probably at the club.

MRS. SMITH. Going to call him up to call him down, eh?

MRS. JONES. Yes, I am. (*walks over to telephone, rings and gives number*) Holloa, Commercial Club? (*pause*) I want to speak to my

husband. (*pause*) How do you know? I haven't told you who I am yet? (*pause, then slams up receiver*)

(*Chorus—What is it? What is the matter? etc.*)

MRS. JONES. (*indignantly*) The impudent thing! Said my husband wasn't there before I told him who I was and when I said so he said it was quite unnecessary to know who I was—nobody's husband was ever by any chance there.

MRS. WHITE. Orders from those husbands of ours.

MRS. GREEN. Oh, these monsters of men! Why did we ever marry them. (*sinks down in chair, the rest also sit*)

MRS. JONES. Why did we marry them? I suppose for the same reason lots of women buy dogs and parrots—they see other women have them and don't realize what a trial they are.

MRS. SMITH. Men are like jobs—when you need them and want them they're not there. When you don't need them and don't want them they're thicker'n flies in fly time.

MRS. BROWN. If a man hasn't anything he's mighty willing to promise to give you half of it but if he has anything it's mighty hard to get a nickel without false pretences.

MRS. SHAW. Does your husband give you an allowance?

MRS. BROWN. He did one month but he was so mad because I spent it before he could borrow it back that he never would again. Men are like contracts—if you once sign away your rights you never get them back.

MRS. WHITE. That husband of mine told me before I married him that if I would only be his wife I'd be treated like an angel.

MRS. GREEN. Well, you have, haven't you?

Nothing to eat and less to wear. That's like an angel.

MRS. JONES. Well, scientists say man is seventy-five percent water so I suppose we shouldn't take any stock in him. My husband promised if I'd marry him that I could look for an easy life and plenty of money. He was right—I am still *looking* and presume I shall keep on *looking* the rest of my life.

MRS. GREEN. Talk about promises, being treated like angels and all the rest. Do you know that a little while ago I burned all the letters my husband wrote me before we were married?

MRS. WHITE. Haven't you any sentiment?

MRS. GREEN. I did it in self defence. If any one got hold of those letters after his death they'd dispute his will on the ground of insanity. He's willed everything to me and I'm not going to take any chances.

MRS. WHITE. I think I'll do the same with mine, it's too much risk to keep them.

MRS. SMITH. Maud Phillips was wise that she didn't marry that Haskell fellow.

MRS. BROWN. What was the trouble? Wasn't her father on his side?

MRS. SMITH. No, he was in back of him—with number elevens on.

MRS. SHAW. They say they'd die for you and can't even remember to bring home a pound of butter.

MRS. WHITE. Probably it's so greasy it slips their minds. I do hate this everlasting finding fault with the food. Oh, it used to be, "We'll live on bread and kisses," now when I put a nice angel cake on the table he snarls, "You call that thing angel food?"

MRS. GREEN. Tell him if that doesn't suit him you can give him some devilled crabs—be more in keeping with his disposition. Do you know I think a man is a good deal like a camel?

MRS. JONES. Why?

MRS. SMITH. I don't see why a man is like a camel.

MRS. GREEN. Because he's always got his back up.

MRS. JONES. I think married men are a good deal like lamps.

MRS. SHAW. Married men like lamps?

MRS. JONES. Yes, married men like lamps.

MRS. WHITE. Why?

MRS. JONES. They go out sometimes nights when they shouldn't.

MRS. BROWN. Do you know my dog did the cutest thing the other day. My husband was finding fault with everything and everybody.

MRS. SHAW. As usual.

MRS. BROWN. Yes, as usual and that dog went and got his muzzle and laid it right down at my husband's feet.

MRS. SHAW. Pretty good hint for him to shut up. They find fault with everything when they feel like it and then expect you to make up any time they say the word. My husband went off crosser than a bear the other morning and came home at night with a package which he tried very hard to make me ask about. I wouldn't let on I noticed it so finally he said, "Aren't you curious to know what is in this package?" "Not very," says I coolly. "Well, it's something for the one I love best in the world." "Oh, is that so?" says I, "then it must be those suspenders you said you needed."

MRS. GREEN. I read a pretty good piece on matrimony the other day. I think I have it in my pocket now.

(*Chorus. Read it. Oh, let's hear it, etc.* MRS. GREEN *reads* AUNT HETTY *on Matrimony to be found in Dick's Dutch, French and Yankee Dialect Recitations.*)

MRS. JONES. Idiots! Yes and there's Mary Cameron been married six times.

MRS. GREEN. Well, she married three pairs of lemons trying to get a peach.

MRS. WHITE. Still Mr. Rapp swells up with pride (*rises and imitates*) when making his political speeches and says he doesn't hesitate to admit that whatever he is to-day is due to the influence of his wife.

MRS. GREEN. That's right, always blame the woman. (*laughter*)

MRS. JONES. That man is too lazy and too mean to live. When some one asked him why he didn't join the business men's gymnasium class at the Y. M. C. A. he said he didn't need any calisthenics—he got all the exercise he needed building the fire every morning.

MRS. SMITH. What kind of a fire—wood or coal? Lots of ashes, I suppose.

MRS. JONES. No, they use a gas stove and he has to light a match.

MRS. BROWN. Have you noticed that his little boy is wearing glasses? Poor little chap!

MRS. SHAW. What a pity! Are his eyes in poor condition?

MRS. BROWN. No, the boy doesn't need glasses at all but it's a pair his grandfather used before he died and that old curmudgeon makes the boy wear them—says it's a shame to waste them. (*groans, shakes of head, etc.*)

MRS. SMITH. Well, I call that the limit for meanness. Going back to cooking, do you know I can make a veal cutlet look like a turkey.

MRS. SHAW. A veal cutlet look like a turkey! Huh, I can do better than that.

MRS. SMITH. What, I'd like to know.

MRS. SHAW. I can make my husband look like a lobster.

MRS. SMITH. That's a pretty good trick to know. How do you do it?

MRS. SHAW. When he comes prowling home about two o'clock in the morning make him try saying "Smith's spirit flask split Phillip's sixth sister's squirrel's skull." (*laughter*)

CHORUS. Good. We'll try it—etc.

MRS. SHAW. If he gets through that safely have him try, "Geraldine, give Grimes, Jim's gilt gig whip and goggles. He's going joy riding in the jinrikisha after ginseng." (*more laughter*)

MRS. SHAW. If he says that all right, I let him in. If he can't, he has to sleep in the auto house.

MRS. WHITE. I should think he *would* look like a lobster after that. Do you ever try having them count a dish full of beans when they get home late? That's a pretty good test. My husband said he never believed there were so many beans in the world until he tried to count them at three o'clock in the morning.

MRS. GREEN. My husband was at a smoker at the club Saturday night and didn't get home until one o'clock.

MRS. JONES. Is that why he wasn't at church Sunday morning?

MRS. GREEN. No, he says the ventilation is so poor in church and the atmosphere gets so heavy that he can't keep awake.

MRS. SMITH. 'Too bad about him! Presume you couldn't cut the air with a knife at his old smoker. Have you ever heard about the time Al. Brett went to church?

MRS. BROWN. Didn't know he ever went.

MRS. SMITH. He did, once. When the man passed the contribution box he leaned over and, in a stage whisper, said, "Excuse me, I can't vote. I haven't got out my papers yet."

MRS. BROWN. Makes me think of John Wilbur.

He's a policeman you know. When they pass the contribution box he just shows his badge.

MRS. SMITH. Suppose he thinks that will pass him through the pearly gates.

MRS. SHAW. Talk about waiting for women to get ready! I always have to wait and wait for my husband Sunday morning before he can tear himself away from his old Sunday paper.

MRS. WHITE. Same at my house. He asked me once if I died first if I'd wait for him on the other shore. I told him if I didn't it would be the first religious service I didn't wait for him.

MRS. BROWN. I don't go to the Congregational Church any more.

MRS. SHAW. What grudge have you against the Congregational Church?

MRS. BROWN. A very decided grudge. It was in the Congregational Church I first met my husband.

MRS. WHITE. I saw an awful funny thing in Church the other Sunday.

MRS. GREEN. Tell us about it.

MRS. WHITE. You know Mr. Reynolds is very deaf and always has to carry a large ear-trumpet. We have a new usher, a Scotchman, Mr. Burns, and he'd never seen an ear-trumpet before so he watched Mr. Reynolds very closely and when he saw him start to raise the trumpet he could stand it no longer so hurried over to him, shook a warning finger emphatically at him and said, "One toot and you're oot." (*laughter*)

MRS. GREEN. Speaking of bodily afflictions, Si Hastings must have a lot of trouble with his teeth.

MRS. JONES. I always thought he had particularly good teeth.

MRS. GREEN. Well, I heard him telling some one that it cost him thousands of dollars to get his eye teeth cut.

MRS. JONES. Huh, I reckon it did. He and Abe Goddard are great cronies. I wonder if Abe drinks hard now.

MRS. SMITH. Don't know whether he drinks or not, but his nose is so red it singes his mustache.

MRS. BROWN. What's the matter with Sam Townsend's finger? I saw he had it all bandaged up.

MRS. SHAW. He ran a splinter in it, I believe.

MRS. BROWN. Ran a splinter in it? Been scratching his head?

MRS. JONES. Wooden, eh?

MRS. WHITE. I hear that Hiram Atkins has joined the new Progressive party—says it's as pure as the *driven* snow.

MRS. GREEN. Huh, pure as the driven snow. Guess it's been driven through some mud. Hi thinks he's a great orator.

MRS. JONES. I heard him talk about two hours the other evening.

MRS. SMITH. What was he talking about?

MRS. JONES. I don't know. He didn't say and it would puzzle a Dutchman to find out.

MRS. SMITH. Herbert Harding is sticking to the Republican party. I believe he's running for Mayor.

MRS. BROWN. Thought he believed the office should seek the man and not the man the office.

MRS. SMITH. That's what he says but he'll look out to hang out a lantern and ring a bell so the office will know which way to look.

MRS. SHAW. Is Tom Sharp in favor of the initiative and referendum?

MRS. WHITE. His wife says he is and also the recall and local option and anything else that is an excuse for going to the polls and getting rid of a day's work.

MRS. GREEN. I asked my husband what a referendum was.

MRS. JONES. He's such a politician I presume he explained it to you very clearly.

MRS. GREEN. No, he said he didn't know whether it was a soft drink or part of an aeroplane.

MRS. SMITH. And still they say women are not well enough informed to vote. Are you in favor of women voting, Mrs. Brown?

MRS. BROWN. No, I can't say I am just at present. The men have got things into such a mess that I think they ought to clean them up themselves, then we'll step in and keep things clean.

MRS. SHAW. Their politics are a good deal like their housekeeping. Pretty dirty!

MRS. JONES. Oh, dear, this dreadful house! Is there anything that a man can do better than any one else?

MRS. WHITE. Lawyer Briggs says there's one thing he can do better than any other lawyer.

MRS. JONES. What is that?

MRS. WHITE. Says he can read his own writing.

MRS. GREEN. Oh, I ought to be at home cleaning up that dreadful mess.

MRS. SMITH. So ought I but I just can't get up my courage to start.

(Chorus. Nor I. Oh, dear, I suppose we'll have to—etc., etc.)

MRS. JONES. I'll look out and get on my fighting dress to-night all right.

MRS. BROWN. Your fighting dress?

MRS. JONES. Yes, haven't you one?

MRS. BROWN. No, I don't believe so. What is it anyway?

MRS. JONES. Why, it's a dress that buttons in the front so I don't have to ask my husband to button it for me. Think I'll need all the fighting clothes I own to-night.

MRS. SHAW. Does your husband like these clinging gowns?

MRS. JONES. Clinging gowns! Yes, he likes them to cling to me about ten years.

MRS. WHITE. They say the modern woman "toils not, neither does she spin" but I have to *toil* pretty hard and *spin* a good many fairy tales to get a new dress.

MRS. GREEN. Isn't that so? I need a new hat most awfully.

MRS. JONES. What kind are you going to get? Merry Widow?

MRS. GREEN. No, "Miserable Wife" would be more appropriate.

MRS. SMITH. Talk about women being particular and hard to suit. Why, my husband is the fussiest mortal.

MRS. BROWN. I'm surprised. He always dresses so quietly.

MRS. SMITH. He does not. Dresses quietly! You just ought to hear him when he loses a collar button. Dresses quietly!

MRS. SHAW. Henry Lee is a well dressed man.

MRS. SMITH. So is a clothing store dummy.

MRS. WHITE. Raymond Fox is the most particular man about his neckties. There are very few kinds or colors that he'll wear and they have to be just such a length and width.

MRS. GREEN. Have you ever heard Mrs. Fox tell about the time she tried to pick out a necktie for him?

(*Chorus. No. Tell us—etc.*)

MRS. GREEN. The clerk showed her necktie after necktie, but not one that her husband would wear. She kept telling the clerk each new one he showed her, "No, my husband wouldn't wear that. No, nor that, etc." At last, in despair, the

clerk said, "Madam you don't want a necktie. What you want is a divorce."

MRS. JONES. Men make a great deal of fun of women's clothes but have you ever stopped to think how ridiculous a man's clothes are. Beginning at his head, look at the thing he wears—a hideous felt thing so hard and tight that it leaves a red furrow on his forehead when it is removed.

MRS. SMITH. Yes, and if it is a sixteenth of an inch higher or lower in the crown or narrower or broader in the brim than the latest model in the hatter's window it must be instantly changed no matter whether the style is becoming or not.

MRS. BROWN. Think of the neck rigging! Six or eight thicknesses of cotton or linen with a string of colored silk around it, all drawn so tight that the windpipe is nearly severed.

MRS. SHAW. Consider his shirt! A stiff, board-like article supposed to lie smooth and placid but which usually cracks, breaks, rumples and pushes up under his chin like a stone wall.

MRS. WHITE. And his vest! A regular sham! Queen Anne front and Mary Ann back! Front of rich material, back of flimsy miserable cotton stuff.

MRS. GREEN. Then his coat! A garment with two tails decorated with two buttons guaranteed to fasten the owner to any piece of furniture on which he happens to sit.

MRS. JONES. Below the coat two cloth stove-pipes for his legs. These are suspended from his shoulders by decorated rubber straps that make the creature look like a harnessed mule.

MRS. SMITH. They're mules all right. The space of several inches which intervenes between the trousers and shoes is covered with a piece of colored silk or cotton unlike anything else in the surrounding landscape. And the shoes! Mud scows with turned up noses and verandas extending all around the front half of the shoe. No more the shape of

the foot than the rest of the clothes are the shape of the rest of the body.

MRS. GREEN. *That* is the lord of creation.

MRS. BROWN. And yet they make fun of our clothes. "Oh, wad some power the giftie gie us. To see oursels as ithers see us!"

(*Knock at door. All jump.* MRS. BLACK *rushes in, laughing very heartily. Holds hands on sides and laughs, sways back and forth, others surround her in astonishment, asking questions and taking hold of her.*)

MRS. JONES. What *is* the matter, Mrs. Black?

MRS. SMITH. I believe the sight of her house has driven her crazy.

MRS. BLACK. (*still laughing*) No—no—no.

MRS. BROWN. What is it then?

MRS. BLACK. (*still laughing*) Oh—oh—oh—you never saw anything so funny in all your life. (*has another spell of laughing*)

MRS. JONES. Well, I guess if you had such a looking house as this you wouldn't feel so much like laughing.

MRS. BLACK. Your house isn't a circumstance to mine but (*laughing again*) I've laughed till I ache all over.

MRS. WHITE. Do hurry up and tell us about it.

MRS. BLACK. You just ought to see my husband —worst looking object you ever saw in all your life. (*has another spell of laughing*)

MRS. SHAW. What is the matter with him?

MRS. BLACK. (*still convulsed with laughter*) Oh—oh—oh—he evidently wanted to look young while I was away and tried to dye his hair and it turned it a brilliant green like a head of celery. (*laughs again—others join feebly*)

MRS. BLACK. He finally confessed—said the first application turned it brindle, the second, yellow, and

the third, green, and he can't budge the green. I found him locked up in the bedroom where he's spent most of the time since I left.

MRS. GREEN. It'll wear off in time, won't it?

MRS. BLACK. That's what he's wondering. (*laughs heartily again*) Oh, it's too funny!

MRS. JONES. I can't see how you can laugh so when we have such houses to clear up.

(*Chorus. Nor I. How can you. I don't feel as if I'd ever laugh again, etc.*)

MRS. BLACK. Come on over all of you and take one look at him. It'll serve him right to be put on exhibition and one glance is warranted to cure the worst attack of the blues.

MRS. JONES. We surely need something to make us smile again after this experience, but I think those husbands of ours should be punished in some way.

CHORUS. So do I. And I, etc.

MRS. SMITH. What can we do? (*all think a minute*)

MRS. JONES. I have it. Let's all send for our mothers to make us a long visit.

CHORUS. The very thing. Good, etc.

MRS. JONES. That will be killing two birds with one stone. They'll help us clean up these awful houses and make those husbands of ours walk the chalk line for awhile.

MRS. SHAW. I'll go right home and telephone so mother will get here before that husband of mine gets home.

CHORUS. So will I. And I, etc.

MRS. BLACK. And I'll make my husband sit at the window as you go by. (*all hurry out*)

CURTAIN.

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